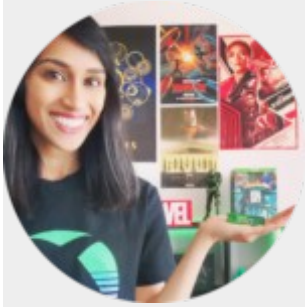
Women’s History Month 2022: Xbox Ambassadors Share Their Stories

Community Fifthpaw Mar 1, 2022

Happy Women’s History Month! Highlighting and amplifying community voices is core to the Xbox Ambassadors community. So, in celebration, we asked those who identify as women how games with female representation have impacted them and to share their own stories about being a member of a gaming community.

Here are their stories in their own words. If you would like to hear some submitters reading their own stories, head on over to our YouTube channel!

MissDeusGeek

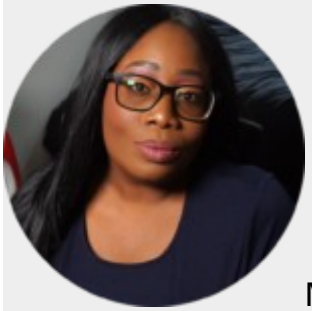


Games with characters that identify as women had a profound impact on me as a young girl. Many of the games I played featured characters like Lara Croft and Sonya Blade, who were strong, badass women. They portrayed the notion that being female posed no barrier to engaging in activities that were typically reserved for their male counterparts. Lara Croft in particular played a large part in my development.

In showing me, as a young girl, that girls get it done too, I was able to pursue my interest in typically ‘male’ hobbies with confidence. Her combat skills, finesse with wielding weapons, intelligence and ‘take no nonsense’ attitude even led to my interest in joining the New Zealand Defence Force at one point.

Without positive and welcoming gaming communities, I most likely wouldn’t be where I am today in the games industry. The Xbox community in particular helped me learn that the online gaming world was not as scary and ‘dangerous’ as I had once believed. By being open, welcoming and encouraging of me, I was able to not only feel confident playing games online (and live streaming them too) despite being quite terrible at games, but I made some lifelong friends along the way. Gaming communities that create a safe space for gamers of all walks of life can really help make a gamer feel more connected, learn about different cultures, meet new people, and all while enjoying similar interests and passions with each other.

Munchkindoom



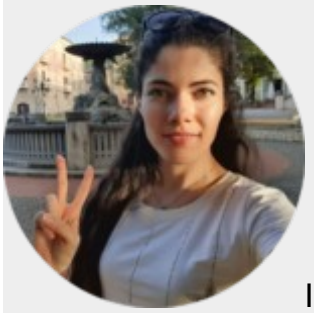
My most memorable moment of representation would be when I was playing Paladins on Mixer and got my first feature as a streamer. I cried in front of 600 people thanking them for hanging out with me as I was playing my favorite character Imani, a Black woman who shoots fire and ice with a dragon as her ultimate. I have often felt so empowered when I see women representation in gaming, but this was very special to me as I could see myself sometimes flying around on that dragon winning the game.

To know that there are people who work hours upon hours to ensure that when they design and craft female characters, they represent all shapes, sizes and colors means the world to me. To know there are developers who ask for this representation because they understand it has lacked for many years warms my heart. I am thankful when I see “me” in the games and know it will inspire the next young gamer to take a chance on themselves in the industry because they can actually SEE it in front of their face on a screen. The dream is real.

The gaming community has impacted my life for the better as once I was just a gamer but am now an influencer within this industry helping to promote great change. I have been blessed to work with so many brands who accepted me for being a woman and, furthermore, not the standard image of

what people THINK a gamer girl looks like. Being surrounded by so many women that inspire me daily brings me great jot and I want that to continue to years to come.

LunaLight7



It’s nice when I find female characters in videogames. In particular, I love those characters who are able to express themselves and the values they believe in, surrounded by details that give depth to the character and that immediately give a convincing impact on whoever plays. A woman character that I really appreciated and helped me in my personal growth was definitely Lara Croft from the latest Tomb Raider trilogy.

She is represented as an independent woman in search of her roots, curious about the world around her, resilient to the problems she encounters and a reliable companion who does not give up in the face of difficulties. Lara Croft has been indispensable for me to fortify my spirit in dealing with everyday issues and to make myself resolute in times of doubt. In her I was able to glimpse that strength that each of us possess and to realize that it is important to recall the goal we are pursuing, but also to find time to take care of ourselves.

I think gaming communities are very useful, especially in this period of social distancing. I love playing multiplayer games and for this reason I have had the opportunity to meet wonderful people, to know their personal stories and to have an incredible sense of cohesion that I have been able to experience. Beyond the very few situations of discouragement that I happened to experience, I felt welcomed to be able to express my sense of unity, to help those who asked for advice and to laugh with them. I have precious moments of people who later became friends even in real life, where we had a chance to meet and feel that gratitude that can only be felt by meeting the right people.

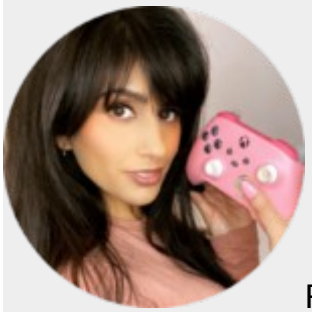
Princesss Bonez

I believe that the biggest game that features a woman that impacted me was Gears 5 with Kait Diaz being the main character and her journey to learn more about the necklace that she has. I remember playing the campaign for the first time and feeling as if it was written to open my eyes about the things that had taken place in my personal life. The game made me feel that I could chase down some of the difficult things in life like Kait did even though I had so many fears and doubts about my journey. Kait shows how independent women can be when things get difficult such as seeing her mother and uncle get swept up by snatchers and wanting to find them even though she wants to mourn.

The equivalent that I found with that was continuing to battle stage 4 lung cancer through the death of my mother who was also fighting cancer because I knew my family needed me. Sometimes as gamers, I believe that we forget that games can help us work through the tough times in life because it allows us to escape from everything and just relax.

Gaming communities have made my experience as a gamer the best I could possibly ask for, especially as I work through the difficulty that life has thrown at me. Gaming communities have allowed me to escape everything that goes on, socialize with others that have the same interests as I do in games and find others that want to play the same things. Being able to come into a community and see the hype and positive energy can wash all the negativity away and make me feel as if I belong among the other people. Gaming communities can allow a gamer to grow as both a gamer in gaming skill and as an individual in socialization and personality.

MahatMama1283



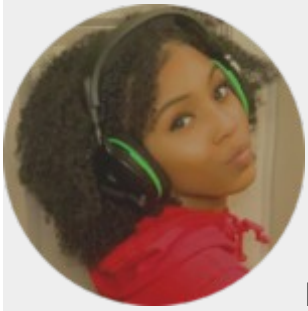
Raji: An Ancient Epic really moved me. The protagonist is an Indian girl, and my daughter was so excited to see that. I, as a grown woman, was elated. It was an amazing opportunity for me to be reminded of

the beautiful culture I came from. Representation is important because it correlates with a healthy community!

If it weren't for the welcoming vibe of the Xbox community, I wouldn't be here. I was afraid to go around calling myself a Gamer. I thought that I would be ostracized, but that wasn't what happened at all. I was welcomed in. People were like "Happy to have you!"

Everyone I've interacted with and met through Xbox (both professionally and personally) has been respectful and kind. It speaks volumes of the community that I feel safe, because so many women don't have that in their professional or even personal lives. Now, I'm writing about video games and video games are my career! A positive, uplifting community is what I was looking for, and I found that with Xbox. I feel celebrated instead of ashamed, and I'm proud to be here!

selenadeon5x



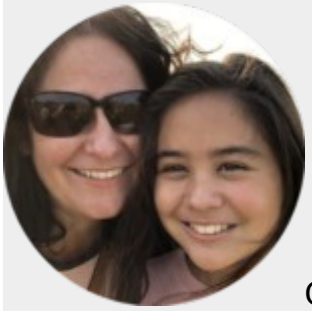
I have always had a special place in my heart for gaming, let alone women in gaming or female-led roles in video games. These games simply started out as me playing computer games such as, Angelica in "Rugrats: Totally Angelica", "Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?", "Secret Agent Barbie", playing as Starfire or Raven in "Teen Titans: Battle Blitz"; to more current games like conquering maps as Lifeline or Wattson in Apex Legends and seeing popularized figures like Ariana Grande or Dr. Slone battling in Fortnite with their own storylines and fanbases.

Every game is its own unique adventure and opportunity to step away from reality and into an imaginative realm of endless fun. These female features have made me more anticipating of what gaming companies will be capable of next! As a woman, I love to see representation in a multitude of ways because no woman is a monolith, and neither are our stories. Games should mimic that. Whether we're fans of Isabelle in Animal Crossing or Lady Dimitrescu in Resident Evil; we love gaming all the same.

As much as I would like to say that being a female gamer has been an easy stream it has often felt like an uphill battle at times. We have to almost be twice as good to gain the same respect and satisfaction as our male competitors continuously do. In the same breath I can say that we have made such huge strides and impacts as women in the gaming community in

the last 20 years. From Twitch to YouTube, there have been women such as Pokimane and XmiraMira that continue to grow within their platforms and communities showcasing just how awesome and talented women truly are within the gaming realm. If anything, my experience has made me work harder and play better as female gamer. Wouldn't trade my controller for anything.

SnipedByAGir1



Games that feature women as lead characters have improved gaming immensely for me. I've always been hooked on gaming since I was a little kid. I was exposed to gaming in the mid 80s by watching my aunt play the Legend of Zelda and Gauntlet. Gaming has come a long way since then. I love playing RPGs. When Dragon Age: Origins came out I feel like a whole new world of gaming opened up for me. I don't think there had been many games that I had played before this series where you could actually play the entire series as a female lead.

And the series actually respected whether you were a female or male. I was always used to playing through games as the lead guy. This was a breath of fresh air. It didn't take long before I realized that Bioware also had this other littler series called Mass Effect. I've played through both these series more than I care to mention. These games have meant a lot to me, and I will forever be a fan. I wouldn't have fallen in love with them as much as I did if I hadn't been able to play them as a strong female lead.

I think gaming communities have opened the doors for me to play with people from all over the world who I wouldn't have met otherwise. I'm an achievement hunter. I'm currently the #1 female in Canada for GamerScore. I joined the TrueAchievements gaming community a decade ago now. Before then I would never really thought of playing online with random people that I didn't know. But thanks to TrueAchievements I've met some super wonderful people. Like minded adults and some of them have become my best friends. I think these communities have encouraged me to branch out and try all kinds of games that I never would have otherwise.

Let's be honest. Not everyone out there understands what it's like to be an achievement hunter let alone a 42-year-old mom of 2 who's #1 hobby is playing Xbox games whenever she can. I love that I can talk about nothing but games with the people on these sites to my heart's content. It's made

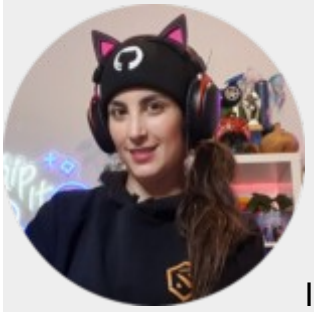
gaming a much more social activity for me and definitely gotten me through some hard lockdowns these last couple of years.

PanteraR0sa

As a kid growing up in the Dominican Republic in the 1990s, some of the first female lead characters I encountered were the protagonists and supporting characters in the video games I played. Samus, Zelda, Lara Croft, and Carmen Sandiego were just some of the characters that allowed me to see myself represented in the games I played. As the world of gaming evolved, titles such as Morrowind, Oblivion, Skyrim, Fallout, Dragon Age, and Mass Effect gave me the ability to craft female-identified player characters that reflected me and my identity in many ways. Video games opened up a new world of immersion and creativity for me as a young girl, and they have ultimately shaped the woman I am today.

Being a latinx female gaming content creator on YouTube, I feel so lucky to have an audience that acts as a supportive and inclusive community, where sharing my Xbox gameplay, tips, and love of gaming has become one of my favorite creative outlets and ways to connect with like-minded players. As a kid, my gaming community was comprised of cousins, friends, and neighbours happily huddled around a classic console. Today, I can share that warm feeling with folks all around the world, and that’s what I call magic.

MishManners

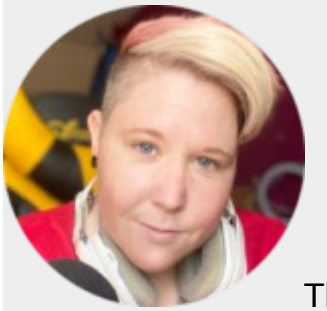


I suppose it never really bothered me not being able to be a girl while playing games, but now it’s just nice to see that I can choose female characters. When I was creating my Elder Scrolls Online character, it was awesome to be able to create a character who looked like me. I made myself as I would like to be in a video game. I am a girl IRL and that’s how I identify, so to be able to portray that in the online space is awesome.

The community has really made a difference when it comes to gaming as a woman. I was asked just last night at dinner what it's like being a girl and being a gamer. Yes, it's still tough and there are a lot of stereotypes out there, but it's getting a lot easier. As more women come into gaming and play games, it becomes less "weird" or "unusual" to hear a woman's voice on the other end of a microphone. There are more opportunities for women to play, whether it's casual gaming or competitive gaming.

There's lots of initiatives like Girl Gamer Festival and many women's gaming groups (both for pros and streamers), meaning there's a much safer space to stream/play, and be supported. This is a great time to be alive (minus COVID!) as the overall response from the community is one of support. We've come a long way from women not wanting to put themselves on voice comms to where we are now. I feel so supported in the communities I'm part of and can't wait to see more women come to gaming.

MissDumbledory



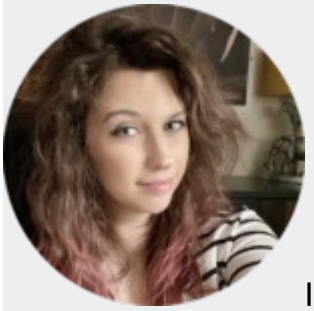
There are many games with strong female character that have influenced and impacted me but my favourite two are Lara Croft in the more recent Tomb Raider games and Eivor (female version) in Assassin's Creed Valhalla. As a recent amputee I've had many struggles both mentally and physically but when I play games with the likes of Lara and Eivor I'm able to relate to their struggles and build from their strengths.

It's inspiring for me to see such intelligent women as leads roles and even though the games may be set out in different times, the principles are fundamentally still the same, women still have struggles whether it be in the past, present, in fiction or reality but we are able to draw strength from one another and succeed in the most unimaginable ways possible.

As a gamer and streamer, gaming communities have been truly amazing to and for me. After my accident I felt really lost so started to stream a little and something magical happened: I've had wonderful experiences like meeting new people from all over the world and from every walk of life. Each day I get to speak to different people which I'd never ordinarily get to and have amazing conversations about everything from gaming to real life issues. Without strong communities I can honestly say I don't know how I would have got through the COVID lockdowns. People coming together

through often difficult circumstances and building amazing communities. It’s all truly incredible.

CryptoDino



I always love playing the strong female protagonist in games, especially when it is offered to choose between man or woman (namely Dragon Age). The ability to have the option and not be stuck with a certain character, unless the game calls for it. I like to see myself in the characters that I play so it always helps when I can model them to how I perceive myself, which naturally includes my gender.

My favourite story would have to be playing as my female Warden in Dragon Age on my Xbox 360 and finding myself getting completely wrapped up in the romance with Alistair (how cliché!) but then kicking butt and having the other NPCs respect my character and also allusions to her being a woman. It says a lot for the writers of the game to make it so immersive however no other game has had me quite as hooked, story-wise, whilst also making me so immersed as a character I modelled on myself (…with elf ears of course).

It’s always been difficult being a female gamer. I am 34 now and have been gaming for as long as I can remember (so likely 30 years!). I have owned every console you can think of as well as having my gaming PC. It’s a huge part of me, so when I find a community that is welcoming and likeminded it always makes the experience better. Thankfully, gaming has taken off in a huge way the last few years and it’s no longer an anomaly to be a woman who games so new generations hopefully won’t have to deal with the toxic communities who would judge a gamer for being female. I am in a lot of communities on discord as well as twitch and its completely changed the way I play games, whether doing keys in World of Warcraft on a streamers channel or finding an Xbox Club for my favourite game and learning new things about it from others.

We hope that our wonderful submitters and their stories will inspire the coming generations of women who play. Because, as we always love to say, gaming is for everyone. Thank you once again to everyone who submitted their stories and YOU for reading them! Happy Women’s History Month!